



SAFE PARISH

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults: Policy and Procedure

The Parish Church of St Mary's Rushden.

This Policy and Procedure was adopted at a Parochial Church Council Meeting held on 7th November 2022.

It is consistent with the Church of England House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice.

This can be found in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, available in the church office.

Each person who works with children and vulnerable adults will agree to abide by this Policy. It will be reviewed annually, accepted and written in the minutes of the PCC.

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Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Children and Young People

This safeguarding policy relates to all groups and organisations of St Mary's Church with responsibility for working with children and young people from 0-18 years of age.

St Mary's PCC takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care. Each of us has a responsibility to prevent neglect and/or physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse if discovered.

Objectives

- a) To keep all children, young people and those who work with them safe from harm. We will aim to supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a child or vulnerable adult or who poses a risk to them.
- b) To try to ensure that every child entrusted in our care is never subjected to any form of abuse by anyone attending our church and church events.
- c) To know the procedures to follow in the event of any concern about a child's welfare or where there are complaints/allegations of abuse made within the church organisation or the wider community.

Working policy

1) Recruitment Procedure

- a) All leaders will be required to complete and sign the Diocesan Declaration form; this will include those adult members of mixed age activities, such as bell-ringers, choirs and worship groups, who are in a leadership role. This also includes people aged 16 and 17 who are in a helping role.
- b) A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced check will be required in circumstances where the frequency standard is met. (This is done online and information on how to do this is available from our parish Safeguarding Officer.)
- c) All records are confidential and must be kept in a safe place. This is the responsibility of the Rector. During an interregnum the Rural Dean is responsible for any records. The Church Wardens will liaise with the Rural Dean in the appointment of new workers or any safeguarding issues which may arise.

2) Adult/Child Ratio

- a) At least two adults (18+) to be present with a child or group of children.
- b) Children must be adequately supervised.
- c) The following ratio of children to leaders is a mandatory minimum:
 - i) 0-2 yrs 1 adult to 3 children
 - ii) 2-3 yrs 1 adult to 4 children
 - iii) 4-8 yrs 1 adult to 6 children
 - iv) 9-12 yrs 1 adult to 8 children
 - v) 13-18 yrs 1 adult to 10 young people
- d) More adults may be required for certain outside activities if risk assessment shows this is required.
- e) No adult should be expected to work with children alone (except as part of a formal mentoring project, for which the child's consent has been obtained and

where mentoring will take place in a room specified for this purpose which must have a door with a transparent glass panel). A second adult should be within earshot.

3) Prevention – health and safety (for more information please see relevant risk assessments, available in the church office)

- a) Make sure the premises are safe for the age of the children using them. Furniture and equipment that may be dangerous needs to be made secure or fenced off.
- b) A register of attendance for each group must be kept including the names of leaders and helpers.
- c) Fire exits should be marked.
- d) A first aid kit should be available at the venue of the children's activity and be clearly marked.
- e) An accident/incident report book should be kept.
- f) Adequate insurance should be in place.

4) Parental Consent and Responsibility

- a) Parental consent for a child or young person to attend a particular activity is needed.
- b) A contact number is required in case of emergency.
- c) Further parental consent is needed if children are taken off the premises.
- d) Children should never be driven alone and should always occupy the back seat of the vehicle. It is recommended that the adults should not be a couple. Parents must be informed of the destination and place and times of departure and return. Drivers should check their personal insurance policy and be fully compliant with the law regarding booster seats.
- e) The church accepts responsibility for children and young people only when attending an activity organised by the church. They are the responsibility of parents or guardians before and after any such activity.
- f) In residential circumstances parents/guardians are responsible for their children at all times except for specific church organised activities.

5) Training

St Mary's PCC will make every effort to train leaders and volunteers to the level of their responsibility, using the diocesan training scheme. All adults working with children or young people require C1 training, and in addition leaders require C2 training. Clergy, Readers etc. require C3 training. All training to be refreshed by C5 after 3 years. The diocese has an obligation to train clergy, licensed workers, and leaders. At least one representative will attend safeguarding training and support provided by the Diocese of Peterborough.

6) Guidance for Bellringers

We welcome young people from our own and other parishes and value their contribution to bellringing. We recognise our responsibility as bellringers to create a safe environment in which they are able to learn and practise the art of bellringing with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

Therefore, we require:

- a) Permission form.
- b) At least 2 adults should be in attendance, at least one of whom should have been DBS checked.
- c) Instruction should be given without physical contact except in exceptional circumstances. In an emergency safety overrides all else.
- d) All visiting teams must be made aware that St Mary's has a safeguarding policy and procedures in place. A copy of the policy will be available in the ringing room and visiting teams should be made aware of this.

7) Choir and Worship Group

- a) A permission form is required.
- b) At least 2 adults should be in attendance, at least one of whom should have been DBS checked.
- c) All other issues concerning Choir and Worship Group activities when children are in attendance must follow policy guidance.

8) Organisations using the Church Building/Hall

- a) This safeguarding policy will be displayed on the church and hall notice boards as well as being available in the rector's vestry, church office and ringing chamber. b) Visiting groups will be made aware of the policy and be expected to have the correct ratio of adults to children.
- b) They should be aware of health and safety issues in the building and their responsibilities where children are present.
- c) Groups meeting under the name of another organisation (e.g. Uniformed) must operate within their own safeguarding guidelines.

9) Photography and Video

- a) Permission must be granted by parent/carer before images of children can be taken or used. Parent/carer should fill in a consent form which includes choices of where the photographs and/or video can be used.
- b) Subject to consent, photographs or video taken on a mobile phone should be downloaded to a secure location and deleted from the phone as soon as possible.

10) Electronic communication

- a) Mobile phones:
In general, mobile phones and text messaging should not be used as a means of communication with young people except in an emergency. Notable exceptions will be in relation those directly involved in leading and discipling young people, who shall be subject to additional safeguards.
- b) Social Media:
As far as is possible the church's social media accounts will be private, with new friends/followers subject to moderation by a designated person. Leaders of activities which relate to children and young people should set up only secure, end-to-end encrypted groups, moderated by at least two DBS-checked leaders; chat history and activity within these groups should be available for supervision by the Rector. Communication with individual young people should be

undertaken only with appropriate accountability of the leader(s) with another leader. Written parental permission is required before a young person can be added to a group.

- c) Subject to the above, those attending church should not follow or befriend any young person under-18 on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, TikTok, etc.). Other interaction shall occur only with the consent of the young person's parents/guardian.

Policy and Procedure for Vulnerable Adults

- a) All adults can be vulnerable at some time in their lives, and we recognise this.
- b) We will listen to vulnerable adults, encouraging them to be active contributors to the church community and to lead as independent a life as possible.
- c) We will ensure that any person working with vulnerable adults will have appropriate checks according to diocesan guidelines.
- d) We will aim to supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a child or vulnerable adult or pose a risk to them.
- e) Visitors to vulnerable adults in their own home or in residential facilities will carry identification, having previously made an appointment.
- f) A mobile phone will be carried and someone else should be informed of the visit.
- g) Electronic communication by leaders with adults deemed vulnerable should be accountable to this policy and appropriate supervision. For adults who have capacity, electronic communication is at their own discretion.
- h) Reporting abuse will follow the same guidelines as those for children and young people (as below).

Reporting

- a) The wellbeing of the child/vulnerable adult is paramount at all times.
- b) If there is a concern of abuse by another child/adult within a group it must be reported immediately to one of the following: **Leader, the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Rector**, who will take advice from the relevant agency.
- c) If there is a complaint of abuse by a leader within the church community report to one of the following: **The Rector, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer or Lead Agency**.
- d) If there is a complaint of abuse against the Rector or a member of the clergy team report to one of the following: **Churchwardens, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer or Lead Agency**.
- e) If there is obvious concern about a child's/adult's wellbeing or a child/adult complains of abuse outside the church organisation, report to one of the following: **The Rector, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer or Lead Agency**.
- f) St Mary's PCC will appoint a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). This means that information, procedures and training have a direct line to leaders and workers.
- g) Further safeguarding procedures are held by the Rector and PSO.

Important Note:

Clergy and Diocesan Officers are NOT authorised to investigate any allegations and must never attempt to do so; only the Police or Social Services are authorised to investigate safeguarding cases. They are called the Lead Agencies and will coordinate the responses. The present Parish Safeguarding Officer is Helen Allan, the Diocesan Assistant Safeguarding Officer is Angela Baker and the Rector is Revd Tom King

Contact numbers

Rector, Revd Tom King: 07732 805443
PSO, Helen Allan: 07814 226614
ADSO, Angela Baker: 01733 887040
Churchwardens
Kate Woodfield: 01933 412836
Paul Adams: 01933 318770